THROUGH LIFE'S SHADOWS.

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Author of "Robert Aske," "Not Wanted," "Yvonne St. Claire," etc.

"To stay for good?" asked the driver, "or only for the summer?" p. 34.

CHAPTER VI.

A VILLAGE HOME.

"LET us go into the country, there must be hundreds of cheap out-of-the-way places, where the little money we have would seem twice as much as it does in this wilderness of London, and where you would, both of you, get out without the continual fear of stumbling upon old acquaintances," said Ruth.

"It is hardly worth while moving me," said a sepulchral voice from the sofa at the farther end of the room. "I shall not trouble you long, you will shortly bear me to my grave."

"You have threatened us with that for the last ten years, Maria," said Theresa. "I am afraid it would be a more expensive exodus than the one Ruth proposes, namely, the depths of the country, a living grave; but first, before we make any move, I insist upon changing our name; the name of Richard Oliphant has been too well known in the London world to suddenly sink into oblivion; when we leave this house we leave our identity behind us; from henceforth we are the Misses Cox, you understand; I consider as the eldest I have a right to insist upon this."

"I am indifferent," said Maria, heaving a deep sigh.

"But I am not," said Ruth; "it is as if we, his daughters, were ashamed of our father's name."

"So we are," said Theresa, coldly; "what is the use of pretending otherwise?"

"It was his misfortune, not his fault," said Ruth.

"The fact remains, our name is dishonoured; let it die; fortunately we are only women," answered Theresa, in the same dry, cold manner. "That matter being settled, we had better consider where we can remove to," she continued.

"Do you remember," said Ruth, "father taking me, one holiday time, for a change, after the measles, for a trip into Kent? well, we went to a village some distance from Rochester, there was no train to it, we went by coach, and we put up at a little inn, and we visited an old farm-house, so quaint and pretty; why should we not go there?"

"How are we to find our way? do you even know the name?" said Theresa.

"Yes," answered Ruth; "I remember the village was called L———. I tell you what, Theresa, let me inquire my way, and go and see the place; if I find it habitable and can discover some farm-house or cottage in which we

might live, why should not we go there sooner than elsewhere? it is out of the way, and we are not likely to be molested, even if we retain our name."

"It may be as suitable as any other place," said Theresa; "but you are a mere child, Ruth; how can you go alone?"

"I am not afraid; who would you have me ask to go with me? and if you wish to keep the place of our retirement secret, I must go alone," said Ruth; "to-morrow will be Saturday, I can take an early train to Rochester, and there I can inquire. I remember quite well the inn we got down at, there was such a kind, motherly woman there. Oh, I shall be all right, you need not fear!"

"Beggars can't be choosers. How much money shall you want? you know we have barely enough for the necessaries of life," said Theresa.

"I can go third class," answered Ruth, at which Maria broke forth into a low wail, and a close observer would have seen Theresa shiver, but she only said—

"Be quiet, Maria; of course she both can and must, we all must. Will two pounds be enough to take you there and back, Ruth? If you found suitable rooms you might remain there, we could join you, it would save the return journey."

"Just so," said Ruth; "I'll pack my things in readiness, only taking a carpet bag with me."

"Very well," answered Theresa. "You will remember that from henceforth our name is Cox, not Oliphant."

Ruth shrugged her shoulders, saying, "If you insist upon it I suppose it must be even so," and she left the room.

The next morning she took an early train to Rochester. From thence the remainder of her journey was by coach. Ruth was a bred and born Londoner; with the exception of that one journey in her childhood with her father, which had remained so indelibly fixed in her memory, she had never been to any more distant resorts than Brighton, Eastbourne, or such like fashionable places. Very different was this driving through the open country, on the top of the coach, perched beside the driver, up hill and down dale, through the fair county of Kent. Never before had she felt such a sensation of exuberant life; for the first time since her father's death and Clement's departure her spirits rose; the world was beautiful, life was worth living! The driver was very chatty, and seeing she was a stranger, pointed out to her all objects worthy of notice. Ancient battle-fields of Britons and Saxons on the banks of the Medway, where kings and princes fell fighting for the mastery of the land; grand old heroes, forefathers of the brave "men of Kent." Then followed legends of later times, of Alfred and the Danes, who fought here also for dominion. The driver pointed out to her the show of the county, "Kit's Coty House," a rude monument of olden times, three huge stones set on the ground and a fourth laid transversely as a covering. Through the lovely villages, over the beautiful chalk hills the coach sped on. A very garden of beauty, richly wooded, and with many an acre of green pasture-land, little hamlets dotted here and there, and the church spires rising upwards to sanctify the land.

A feeling of gladness and rest crept over Ruth; surely she should find a home here till Clement came for her? It was so different from the rush and hurry of money-getting London.

By ones and twos the travellers had dropped off, till at last Ruth was the only one remaining, and the coachman, growing more confident, asked—

"You be going to L——?"

"Yes," answered Ruth.

"Have you been there before?"

"Yes; some years ago, when I was a child," she answered.

"You mind the Castle?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, indeed," she replied; "and the curfew-bell, and the beautiful old church, with its peal of bells. It is just because I have such pleasant recollections of all this, and of the village itself, that I have come back."

"To stay for good?" asked the driver; "or only for the summer?"

"I do not know; I cannot say for how long. If we find peace and quiet here, and cheap living, it may be for good. My father is just dead; my two sisters and myself are alone, and my eldest sister is an invalid. We want a quiet place to live in."

The driver looked down at her black dress.

"Maybe you want a grand place, though," he said.

"Oh, no, not at all!" answered Ruth. "I hope to get three or four rooms in some farm-house, where we should not have much to pay, for we are not rich—my father lost his money," and she coloured deeply.

"Then I think I can suit you," said the driver. "Old Farmer Lister's widow and his daughter have rooms which they let out sometimes to painters in the spring and summer. I've often sent them folk, and I know as how they've got no one just at this time. You might go up there the first thing to-morrow morning; any one will tell you the way. It will be too late to-night by the time we get to L——."

"I am much obliged to you," said Ruth, with a feeling of intense relief. "I will go the first thing to-morrow morning."

They reached their journey's end at last, stopping at a real old-fashioned country inn, with the sign of the "Castle" swinging outside. Inside, sanded floors, with rows of tables and benches, a few wooden elbow-chairs, in which the magnates of the village—the doctor, the miller, and sometimes even the vicar—sat, discussing politics, religion, or village news. Everything was clean and bright and cheery.

"I've brought you a rare thing in these parts—a young lady," said the driver, stooping down from his high box and addressing the host and hostess, and their buxom, rosy-cheeked maid, all of whom had come to the door as the rumble of the coach was heard. "You'd better bring the ladder."

He was obeyed.

"Now, miss, don't be afeared," he said, as he swung himself down.

But Ruth was not in the least inclined to be afraid. She was soon standing on the ground.

"If you'll step this way, miss, you'll find it more comfortable and quieter than the public room," and the hostess showed her into a parlour so quaint and pleasant, that Ruth felt herself at home at once; and later on, when she lay down to sleep in the guest chamber, the moon shining through the lattice-windows on to the bare white boards, and on the white dimity curtains of the old-fashioned four-post bed, a sense of peace crept over her, and with a glad sigh of contentment, and a last caressing thought of Clement, she closed her eyes and fell asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

LOVE AND LABOUR.

"At least, we shall be hidden here; no one will find us out. Thank God for that!" and Theresa stood in the

centre of the old-fashioned parlour in the farm-house, where Ruth had succeeded in taking rooms for them.

Maria had been carried in and laid on the deep, wide sofa, having been brought up from the village in the doctor's trap, lent for the occasion, the only conveyance at all suitable, and, seeing he was likely to gain a new patient thereby, it was considered by all the right thing.

Now she lay with eyes closed, whilst Ruth stood by greatly distressed, not in the least knowing what to do for her.

"Leave her alone, I find it the best way," said Theresa, "there is really nothing to be done," and she herself sank into a large, old-fashioned arm-chair, and leaning her head on her hands, burst into tears.

"Oh, Theresa," said Ruth, "do you not like it?"

"Like being buried alive! you must be mad, Ruth; show me to my room."

Silently Ruth obeyed, trembling. There were two rooms communicating, and a third small one on the other side of the landing, which was occupied by Mrs. Lister and her daughter. They were low pitched and old-fashioned, but fairly comfortably furnished. Ruth had declared herself perfectly satisfied with a large attic, in which had been stored away for years odds and ends of lumber. She and Miss Lister had cleared it out and made it habitable; indeed, Ruth said it was charming, with its old oak bedstead, antique chest of drawers, table and chairs to match, and all manner of quaint bits which she had made use of, such as bracket ornaments, etc. From the projecting attic window the view was wonderful. The farm-house stood on the top of a hill overlooking the village, and beyond were visible the turrets of the old Norman castle and the distant hills.

"I shall be quite happy here," Ruth said. She would have been happy anywhere, for that living love which dwelt within her and made her heart glad. And so this strange new life began for the three sisters.

"We shall go nowhere; we will see no one," Theresa stated; "Maria's state of health will be our excuse;" and they kept religiously to this plan of action. Maria personated the invalid, and Theresa the devoted sister, who attended to her night and day; they were never visible, the doctor and the vicar called in vain. A large garden stretched at the back of the house, and on fine days they took what exercise they needed there in that solitude.

"That is all we have to live on for three months," Theresa said to Ruth one morning, about a week after their arrival, pushing a few gold pieces towards her; "you had better pay the rent, and then do what you can with the rest; if we starve we have only to take care that no one knows it."

"But——" said Ruth, looking at the money.

"It is of no use arguing," said Theresa, with a wave of her hand; "we shall have that amount every quarter, Ruth, and no more, and even that is conditional."

"How conditional?" asked Ruth.

Theresa deliberately turned her back upon her sister and went and stood in the window, looking out. After a moment's reflection she answered, "The creditors gave us a small sum of money, which we have spent during the last three months and in moving here. Dr. Morgan, who, as you know, has managed all our affairs, was of course aware of this fact, and he came to me one day and made me an offer; he will allow us so much a quarter if you agree to throw over his son, and to cease all correspondence with him. If you have not told him our present address and new name it will be very easy; if you have, you must just simply say you have changed your mind. Of course you will not hesitate, for we have no other resource. Clement Morgan has gone out with an immensely wealthy man, whose only daughter is very lovely, and just seventeen; you cannot stand in his light, they will be together, comparatively alone, for months, they are bound to fall in love with each other, and if he marries her, his fortune is made; whereas, if he marries you, in the course of the next ten years he will virtually be ruined; and as for us, well, either you must provide for us, or we must depart as gracefully or as sensationally out of this wicked world as we can. If, on the contrary, Clement marries the young lady in question, Dr. Morgan engages to double our present allowance, which, as you see, is a mere pittance; you have sense enough to understand, Ruth, that unless you wish us to starve, you must break off at once with Clement Morgan."

"It is impossible, Theresa. I cannot," said Ruth, slowly, leaning against the wall; "why did you not tell me this before we left London? I would have worked night and day for you both, rather than have accepted money from Dr. Morgan; here I can do nothing."

"Just so," said Theresa, coldly. "Dr. Morgan was aware of that fact, and therefore he made the offer."

Tears sprang to Ruth's eyes. "It is cruel," she said.

"I do not see it," answered her sister. "It is natural Dr. Morgan should consult his son's interests. An heiress presents herself, also a beggar girl; it is only to be expected that he should give the preference to the heiress; but, be this as it may, we have no choice, either you must accept the offer or we must starve."

"I should have worked in London; I would have done anything," said Ruth. "If it were for Clement's happiness I would have given him up, but to be paid for so doing! oh, Theresa!" and the girl's pale face flushed crimson.

Her sister shrugged her shoulders. "There was no alternative," she said, and to avoid any further discussion she left the room. Then Ruth's passion burst forth; there lay the gold before her, glittering in the sunlight. To her it was the price of her heart's blood, and, laying her head on the table, she sobbed bitterly.

Suddenly she stopped her weeping, lifted her head, and smiled a strange, wistful smile. "Where there is a will, there is a way," she said. "Clement shall be free, but not for this." She gathered the gold together, and without pausing went up to her attic. All that afternoon she was shut in there, not idle, but busy, making packets of what jewels she possessed, old scraps of lace which had belonged to her mother, any and everything which might have the semblance of value. Then she took large sheets of paper, and sketched and painted sprays of flowers, birds and butterflies in bold, grand style, with brilliant colouring. She worked with feverish haste, her lips tight shut, but her hand was firm, determination was written in every feature of her young face, which seemed suddenly to have aged strangely. Two horizontal lines upon her brow marked the care and sorrow which had come upon her. Her kind hostesses, the widow and daughter, came more than once to the door of her room to bring her food.

"Not yet," she answered; "I could not eat, I am busy."

"She's sulking," Theresa remarked to Maria, as they sat at tea, served them by Miss Lister, in quaint, old-fashioned cups, with delicate slices of home-made bread and butter, over which Maria pathetically shook her head, but which, nevertheless, disappeared.

"Poor dear," she murmured; "but she is young and healthy; she ought to think of my sad state. She will recover, I never shall."

"Nonsense," answered Theresa, "you'd be well enough if you chose to exert yourself; but it does not matter now, your being an invalid is rather a convenience than otherwise, and there is nothing to do here."

"Only that I am half starved with the coarse food," said Maria, plaintively. "I who for years have lived on sweetbread and chicken."

"Be thankful for present mercies," answered Theresa, "or who knows the bread and butter, beef and mutton may take unto themselves wings and fly away," and she smiled grimly at Maria's horror-stricken face, little guessing how near her words were to the truth.

It was evening, but in the month of June the days are long. Ruth rose from the table before which she had been working, laid her drawings and paintings in order, and then went downstairs into the half kitchen half sitting-room which the mother and daughter had reserved for their own use. The old lady was sitting in a large, cushioned armchair before the window, knitting. Geraniums and fuchsias filled the window-sill, and a magnificent blackbird perched in a wicker cage that hung on a hook outside. Miss Lister was moving about the room intent on household cares. She was a woman verging upon fifty, a homely figure in her plain woollen dress, black silk apron, lace collar, and large gold brooch; for the Listers had pretensions to gentility, and, indeed, many a member of the house of peers would have found it difficult to show as unbroken a line of ancestors as the Listers could in the parish register and on the crumbling tombstones of the old Norman churchyard. Ann Lister had been a good-looking girl; her complexion was still fresh, and her eyes very blue, whilst her fast-whitening hair fell in curls on either side of her face—it was the fashion of her youth and she had retained it. But far and wide in the village where she was born, and for miles round, Ann Lister was known for her kind heart and large sympathy; no one ever came to her in vain for counsel or for help; of worldly goods she had little, but of that little she gave freely. Gently Ruth entered, but not so gently as to escape Miss Lister's notice.

"Ah, there you are at last, my dear," she exclaimed; "I've been dreadfully worried about you, you've had no food today; have you had fresh trouble, and can't you tell it to an old woman?" and she laid her hand gently on Ruth's arm.

"Just what I have come to do," said Ruth, "if you can spare me a few minutes."

"As many as you like," answered Miss Lister; "but first of all you must be fed. I will not hear a word until you have had your tea. I'm sure you need it."

Obediently Ruth sat down, whilst Miss Lister bustled about; then, when she had served her, she sat down beside her, took up her knitting, and waited.

"I can tell you now?" said Ruth.

"Yes, mother is quite deaf, she will not hear," said Ann Lister.

"I am going to ask you to trust me," Ruth began.

"You need not do that, I have trusted, aye, and loved you from the hour I first set eyes upon you," answered Miss Lister, brushing away a tear. "We old maids have soft hearts sometimes."

"Indeed you have," answered Ruth, and, stooping forward, she held up her face to be kissed. Then, quietly from beginning to end she told her story to her friend. "I am going to take that money back to him. I will not write to Clement, and I will give him up of my own free will; but I will not be paid for so doing," and a great sob rose in her voice.

"And that is all the money you have in the world," asked Miss Lister.

"I have a couple of pounds of my own," said Ruth; "enough to take me up to London and do what I have to do there. Come up into my room, and I will show you my work." She rose, and Miss Lister followed her. "There," said Ruth, "I have an old schoolfellow who cannot draw or paint half as well as I can, and she gets orders and makes money; I am going to her, she will tell me what to do to get work. Only, will you trust us just for a few weeks? I may not be able to pay the rent quite regularly, and we must live on very little. My sisters will be very angry when they hear what I have done, but I will do it. I am not to be bought and sold."

"I will trust you as long as you wish," said Miss Lister; "I am sure it will all come right in the end."

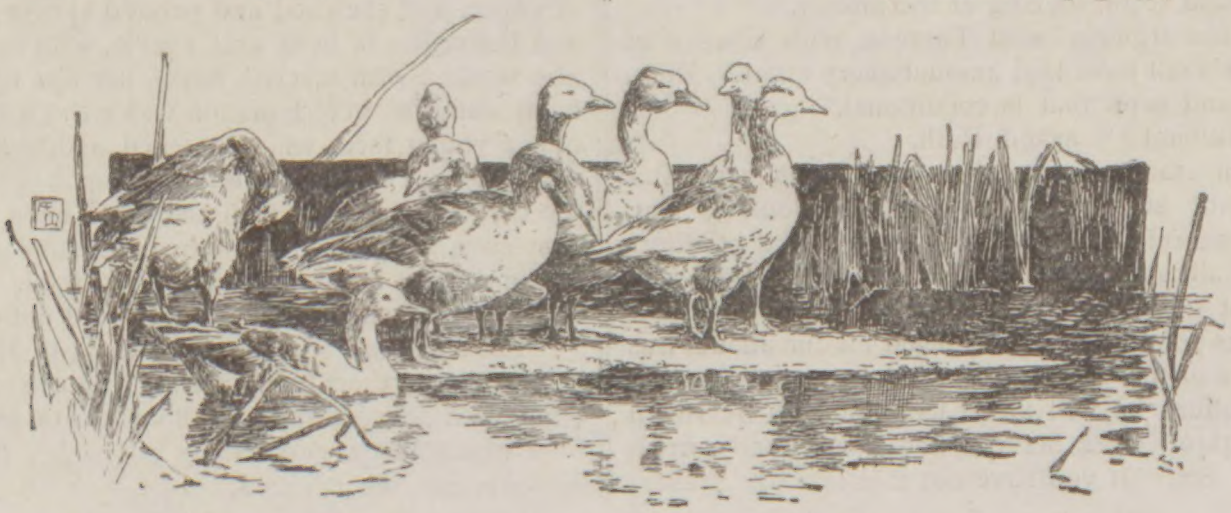
"So am I," said Ruth. "I may give Clement up because it is right to do so; but it remains to be seen whether he will give me up," and a triumphant smile illumined her whole face, making it beautiful as only love can make the human face divine.

The next morning Ruth and Miss Lister were up betimes and hurrying down the village to the "Castle" Inn to catch the coach. They were in good time, and Ruth mounted once again to her place beside the driver, and smiled down bravely upon her friend as they drove off.

"She be young to go about the world alone," said the hostess; "I should be afeared harm might come to her; she's a handsome young lady."

"She's safe enough," said Miss Lister; "there is a Father for the fatherless." And slowly she went back home, her mind filled with thought.

(*Continued on page* 49.)



MISS CHARITY'S NEW NEIGHBOUR.

"WITH your large and growing family, my dear, you cannot be too particular; I do not wish to awaken prejudice, but I felt it to be my duty to enlighten you as to the lamentable state of the domestic *régime* at Field View. Of course, after this, you will discourage any advances young Master Jervoise may make towards acquaintance with your own dear boys and girls; rebellion and disobedience soon become infectious, for as the poet tells us—

'One black sheep infects the flock,
And poisons all the rest.'"

"It is certainly a great pity Mrs. Jervoise should ruin her little son's future by thoughtless indulgence now," says Mrs. Fayring, her busy fingers plying the knitting-needles on behalf of her youngest but one, "perhaps the captain is wiser; it is a misfortune for the boy that his father is so often absent at sea. I quite hoped Mrs. Jervoise would have been an acquisition to our little circle here, but, as you say, a spoilt child is to be dreaded, and I certainly should not like my little ones to become intimate with a boy beyond his mother's management. Your new neighbour ought to read your book on 'The Development of Infantile Character,' Miss Charity," she adds, looking up with a smile into the grave face of her visitor.

"She is agreeably surprised with Mrs. Jervoise." *p.* 38.

"I think of sending Mary Jane in with a copy, with the author's compliments," answers Miss Charity Deben, the maiden lady who resides next door to Field View, and whose reputation for intellect is highly esteemed in Greendell; "you know they sent me twelve copies gratuitously, and I have seven still on hand, so it will be no expense to me. I shall mark Section XV., that bearing on 'The Moral Sense of Infancy,' and underline those paragraphs relating to the necessity of parental discipline, as evidenced in the instantaneous obedience and polished manners of growing youth."

Mrs. Fayring acquiesces somewhat nervously, becoming conscious that her ten-year-old Dick has appeared at the garden-window behind Miss Charity's back, and has assumed erectness of gait and dignity of mien in imitation of Miss Deben, to the delight of admiring kindred around him. Mrs. Fayring motions Dick away with a reproving shake of her head, and remarks with a sigh that children are a great responsibility, to which Miss Charity assents, with the reservation, "but not when strictly brought up on the lines of my book."

"Your own dear innocents, for instance," she says, "how exceedingly docile and polite are their ways! I am sure their polished behaviour must be a great comfort to yourself and Mr. Fayring. Ah, if only that foolish, mistaken woman would take *you* for an example!"

"My children have their faults," says Mrs. Fayring, conscientiously, "though I confess I privately consider them the best in the world."

"Ah, that reminds me of my chapter on 'Parental Partiality'; no doubt you remember my remarks under that head, my dear."

But Mrs. Fayring is not in a position to sit for examination as to her visitor's book, so she changes the turn of the conversation by asking the age of the little boy at Field View.

"Between four and five," is the reply; "the servant girl, being I fear addicted to gossip, has given my Mary Jane several items of information about the family; she says her mistress dotes on the boy, but, alas! I feel sure that in future days he will break her heart, and bring down her grey hairs, also his father's, with sorrow to the grave."

"Oh, don't say that, Miss Charity!" exclaims her hostess, "Mrs. Jervoise is only a young mother, and a

little kind advice may be helpful to her just now; she has made mistakes in the past, but it will only be Christian to try in a sisterly way to set her right, I think she has such a sweet, gentle face; I need not let the children get intimate, but I think I ought to call at Field View and try and be a friend to her."

"Just as you like, of course, my dear; I have warned you, so my duty is performed. I feel it was most providential I should have obtained such early knowledge of my poor neighbour's domestic mismanagement, for I am thus enabled to set the mothers of the neighbourhood on their guard against the infection of disobedience. I happened to go into Budge's for the ingredients for my furniture polish—a recipe of my poor aunt Priscilla's—and there at the counter stood Mrs. Jervoise, paying for some medicine Mr. Budge had made up. They were conversing, and, of course, I could not help over-hearing their remarks. 'The taste is extremely unpleasant,' said Mr. Budge, 'but it is a most useful prescription.' 'I do hope I shall get him to take it,' she said, 'but I expect I shall have trouble.' 'I fear so,' said the chemist, 'but if you persevere it will save his life.' 'He is very obstinate at times,' said Mrs. Jervoise, 'but I will do my best; had it been sweet and nice, I should not have feared any struggle; poor little fellow, I must get him to take it, for his cough prevents him from sleeping.' There, my dear, fancy a mother half afraid to give her child medicine! Why, when *I* was young my aunt Priscilla stood over me with a whip whenever she gave me a powder, and I did not *dare* to make any fuss, I assure you."

"That was surely erring on the *other* side, Miss Charity. I know many children are troublesome about taking medicine, and I have heard of cases where others in the family pretended to be poulticed ere a little one could be persuaded to bear a plaster. But a mother whose children trust her utterly surely need not dread administering poultice or medicine, or have to bargain with business-like little ones as to the bestowal of various bribes if the dose be taken."

"Do *you* have to bribe *your* boys and girls, my dear?" asks Miss Charity, searchingly.

"Certainly not; I expect unconditional obedience, though I must confess our little ones never *lose* by doing as they are told. I give very little medicine, believing fresh air and healthy habits to be more important, but when it *must* be taken my children know their mother would give them nothing unpleasant or painful, such as a plaister, if she could possibly help and cure them by other means. I always quietly explain to them that the remedy is to do them good, and they take it, as a rule, patiently and trustfully. Their father said to me one day, watching our Davie take a dose with the resigned remark, 'never mind, mother, it's not so bad when you get it down,' that it would be well for us if we took from the hands of our Lord the sorrows He sends to bless us in faith as perfect and simple as our children show towards ourselves."

"Yes, I know *yours* are good children," says Miss Charity, rising, "it is for this reason I warn you to keep your little ones apart from Mrs. Jervoise's spoilt boy; you do not want them taught to scream and kick if they cannot have just what they choose."

Miss Charity Deben has been in truth greatly shocked at the laxity of her neighbour's maternal discipline, and the story of the conversation with Mr. Budge soon finds its way around the social circle of Greendell. In a little country town narratives frequently become magnified and varied by the imagination, and ere many weeks have flown little Jack Jervoise has become in a good many eyes a monster in juvenile form, a contaminating influence that good boys and girls must avoid with diligence. Husbands are called upon to render thanksgiving that *their* wives are not so foolish as the partner of "poor Captain Jervoise," and consciously virtuous infants are zealously admonished to have nothing to do by friendly nod, game, or interchanged "confectionery plum" with curly-headed, sturdy-legged Jack.

Mrs. Jervoise wonders a little why Greendell society treats her so unsociably; few have called, and those seem inclined to be frigid and critical, and she wonders still more why nobody takes much notice of Jack, who runs in at times rosy-cheeked and winsome, unconscious of visitors. To his mother he looks irresistible then, glancing shyly up, expectant of caresses, half smiling, half timid; his nurse consoles him afterwards by assuring him he is "a young Cubitt, the precious pet;" but she too in her heart considers Jack worthy of visitors' endearments, and she privately resents the fact that many who call at Field View glance at the unfortunate child with reproval and severity in their looks.

Dick Fayring having taken the opportunity of spring-cleaning time to break his collar-bone, his mother cannot for some time fulfil her intention of calling upon Mrs. Jervoise. One day, however, she decides it will only be kindly to do so, and to endeavour, if possible, to instil some correct ideas of maternal duty into that lady's mind. Mrs. Fayring is not at all certain that Miss Charity's volume is the most tender of counsellors for the young mother; as a sister, she will turn the conversation to poor little Jack, and try and help her new friend to save the boy from the life-long misery of one who is spoilt and selfish.

She is agreeably surprised with Mrs. Jervoise, who seems by no means the weak, backbone-wanting woman she has pictured; and she is touched, too, by a rather lonely looking expression on the face of the mistress of Field View. Nobody seems to have taken her up, or welcomed her into Greendell society, yet the days must be long indeed, waiting for the coming of that ship with which her heart has sailed away.

Mrs. Fayring greatly admires Jack's portrait, painted by his mother. "He does not *look* incorrigible," she remarks aloud, to her own dismay, gazing at the cloudless blue eyes, the fair, wondering face of the pictured boy.

"*Incorrigible*," repeats Mrs. Jervoise, flushing a little; "no, indeed. Our Jack is a little Christian, Mrs. Fayring, for I am sure you believe, as *I* do, that even a child of five years old can love the Lord, and try to please Him. His father and I pray constantly that Jack may grow up in the beauty of goodness, and already I see the answer to those prayers in many a battle against wilfulness."

Mrs. Fayring is silent. Can *she* counsel higher training than that which a Christian mother imparts in faith and prayer? Perhaps Jack is not so hopeless after all; perhaps it *was* specially nauseous physic that the mother feared to give him. Greendell society may have condemned her as weak and indulgent on grounds too slight.

"There he is, in the garden," exclaims Mrs. Jervoise. "It is his birthday to-day, and that bicycle-horse is his present; they are inseparable to-day, of course!"

Just then nurse's voice calls the boy to his tea. Mrs. Fayring decides there will be a storm of passion, for even Dick grows rebellious at times if summoned from his bicycle; but Jack only waits to place his horse where it

can eat grass at will, and runs indoors, evidently used to obedience at the first summons.

"And this is the child with whom Greendell little ones are warned not to associate," thinks Mrs. Fayring, in bewilderment. "Can Miss Charity have made any mistake about her neighbour's management, I wonder? 'Things are not what they seem,' and when neighbours begin to criticise one another, false opinions are often formed, I fear. Why, here is Miss Charity herself," she exclaimed aloud. "Do you see much of Miss Deben, Mrs. Jervoise?"

"Not much; I have very few visitors," is the quiet reply, "little Jack is my chief companion. Sometimes I fancy the Greendell people are rather inclined to avoid Field View, but this is only a notion of my own."

Miss Deben has called, as in duty bound, to explain that an unripe plum, the loss of which she attributed by letter yesterday to Jack's little fingers, has been found amid the grass in the orchard.

"I should not have suspected your child of stealing," she says, "not being given to uncharitable condemnation of others, had I not known the boy is sometimes beyond control. I mean no offence, Mrs. Jervoise, but I am plain spoken, and I must say I deeply regret you are ruining poor John by reckless indulgence."

"I am glad you speak plainly, Miss Deben," says Mrs. Jervoise, "candour face to face is always the kindest course. So you think my Jack troublesome? I hope that is not the general opinion in Greendell. May I ask how he has proved so?"

Seeing the way open to a disquisition on maternal responsibility, Miss Charity relates the conversation heard with her own ears at the chemist's, and is proceeding to quote from the eloquent preface to her book, when Mrs. Jervoise says, simply,

"But, Miss Deben, that medicine was not for little Jack at all—it has been a misunderstanding; I assure you my boy is perfectly obedient. As you know him better, I do not think you will find him the worst of neighbours."

"Not for Jack!" falters Miss Charity, "why, you said 'the cough keeps him from sleeping, poor little fellow.'"

"Did I? Well, my patient at the time was a valuable fox-terrier pup, belonging to my brother who had gone to the Cape, but who has since reclaimed him. Rab was left to my care, and at one time I feared he was going into a decline; but I think now, with Mr. Budge, that it was distemper. I heard the chemist here had several dogs, so I explained the puppy's symptoms to him, and asked his advice. Rab gave a great deal of trouble over that medicine, I remember; but at last we mixed it with some custard, and the little creature swallowed it, to our satisfaction. Jack was all the time entreating him to take it, and relating how much better *he* felt one day after he had taken a powder; but Rab yielded to no persuasion except the custard."

"I am afraid," says Mrs, Fayring, with tears in her eyes, "there has been a prejudice against little Jack as disobedient and spoilt. How easily false conclusions are reached! But you will forgive us all, will you not, Mrs. Jervoise, and bring Jack to play with my Davie?"

"It has all been *my* fault," says Miss Charity, grimly; "what a foolish old woman I am getting! *My* tongue started the prejudice; now I must repair the mischief. I shall take care that everyone in Greendell knows the little bit of scandal had no foundation. Will you pardon an old woman's long tongue, Mrs. Jervoise, that has painted her new neighbour as a weak and unwise mother? And will you send your boy next door sometimes, to make a lonely life more kindly?"

"If you promise *you* will not spoil him," says Mrs. Jervoise, smiling, as she takes her neighbour's hand. "But now will you both honour him by taking afternoon tea in his company? This is a special occasion—my little Jack's birthday, so none of us must look gloomy, or anything but festive and neighbourly to-day!"

M. S. HAYCRAFT.

WHERE THE BROOK AND RIVER MEET.

SOME of us mothers, looking back from the mountain-tops of a busy life, may perhaps remember what it was once to have felt a vacuum in that life, and we may therefore now be ready to recognise the same in the lives of our daughters. Just at that point "where the brook and river meet," where the pursuits of childhood are being abandoned and the employments of womanhood not finally adopted, there is apt to come a break—a pause of indecision as it were, as to which turning is the next to take on life's highway—and here it is that the wise mother will seek to intervene with directing hand. Some of us, indeed, are the fortunate parents of girls who are longing to be freed from the constraints of school, so that they may have the time to devote to some favourite study; girls who, once emancipated from the school-room, will devote their spare hours to the favourite violin, or will for the time consider the acquisition of German as the end and aim of existence. Such girls, if care be taken duly to cultivate their remaining faculties, may safely be left to themselves until such time as other and larger interests spring up, self-sown in the pasture land of their being. But there are others—we all of us know some of them—who take no particular interest in anything; girls who continually have a headache or neuralgia, or general all-overishness, and don't feel quite up to doing to-day whatever is the particular thing they ought to do. Now, all this in other words means that they want an interest in life, some occupation the love of which will be strong enough to overcome the incipient headache or to neutralise the neuralgia. Have we not all met occasionally the heavy girl, that "lump of a girl," as acquaintances designate her, for whom we wish nothing better than that Providence would curtail supplies so that she might have to sweep the room, dust the chairs, and, like the little Spartans of old, go without her meals until she had provided them by her own exertions? "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat" is a doctrine full of wholesomeness, but one which unfortunately cannot be applied in the upper strata of society; therefore, if the stimulus of necessity be wanting, it behoves the careful mother to find a substitute for it. Among the many useful

occupations that are encouraged nowadays for our girls it does not much matter which they follow so long as they follow it with "all their might." If a taste for clear-starching be developed, then by all means let some of the fine things be "got up" at home; or if cookery be in the ascendency, then let a few of the failures be swallowed with equanimity, albeit a little wholesome fun is made of them.

But whatever our girls do, let it be something that they are likely to do well. What can be sadder than to see a well-intentioned girl hammering away conscientiously at the piano for perhaps a couple of hours daily, when her performance will never be anything but mediocre, the spirit of music being dumb within her? Generally some fond parent is responsible for this folly, for human nature is strong within us, and we dearly love to hear our sons and daughters called up for "a little music." When there is a real taste for it, what can be more delightful? but when the music is such as to be only tolerated for politeness' sake, then, indeed, it is time to put an end to it. Although the well-intentioned girl above alluded to does not play at all brilliantly, there is doubtless something else that she could do well if she were only put in the way of doing it.

We mothers are (I speak advisedly) apt to be over-careful with our daughters; when we have borne them in our arms, guided their uncertain footsteps in infancy, and sheltered them through childhood from every adverse blast, we are prone to forget that they can now run alone, and that there is such a thing as over-mothering. I was talking one day to one of two sisters, stout, healthy girls they were by the way, and seeking for a congenial topic, I asked them if they cared for tennis. Yes, they liked it, and they had a tennis court behind the house, but they seldom played, because "papa was always afraid of our catching cold." Now, to my mind, even if the game had resulted in a cold, which a brisk game of tennis is very unlikely to do, I would rather have nursed my daughter through it than have hampered every movement and restrained the healthy instincts of youth with the dread of "catching cold."

And this brings me to a subject which is naturally enough the source of frequent heart burnings amongst mothers, *i.e.*, the letting one's daughters work among the poor. It *is* hard—there is no denying it—to give "yes" as an answer when permission is asked to go on winter evenings to an unsavoury part of the town, where small-pox, as we well know, is sometimes heard of, there to help at a night school or other similar institution. Yet, when all due respect has been paid to the dictates of prudence, a suitable escort provided, and the avoidance insisted upon of quarters known to be infectious, is it not better to trust our daughters even to these possible dangers than that the noble longing to help their needier sisters should be stifled within them? After all, if we look at the matter in the right light, are they not as safe in that crowded mission hall as in our sheltered drawing-room? And, indeed, were the world searched over for a means of filling that vacuum in their young lives before alluded to, what better could be found than the one divinely originated so many centuries ago, namely, that of being "about our Father's business"?

HOW AUNT ETHEL CHANGED HER VOCATION.

BY MRS. IRWINE WHITTY.

SINGLE women, old maids, glorified spinsters, or maiden ladies, by whatever name we like to call them, what should we do without them? When the children catch the measles, or, worse still, when their mothers are laid up and cannot look after them, it is not to some busy mater-familias that we cry for help, but to good, kind Aunt Mary, who has merely to transfer a little parish work to other shoulders for the time being, who comes readily, and who, best of all, stays as long as we require her services.

Ethel Chalmers, however, though a maiden lady, had no such vocation, for she lived in London entirely alone, her brother—her only remaining relative—having gone out to Australia when quite a boy, and having married and settled there. A tiny little body was Ethel Chalmers, always the perfection of neatness in her dress, very well educated, devoted to reading, and entirely content amid her modest surroundings. Modest they were in all conscience, for they consisted of two small rooms and "the use of the kitchen" in a set of London chambers; one room opening out of the other, and placed high enough for Ethel to get a whiff of the morning breeze before it was altogether polluted by contact with the chimney-pots.

Here upon the tiniest of incomes she resided, busy at home with books and pen, and busy abroad three days a week in an occupation which she loved, and for which this nineteenth century has given birth to the term "slumming."

Living long alone had increased a natural timidity, and Ethel was never completely happy except with one or other of her three favourite companions—books, poor people, and writing materials, for writing was her great delight, and many a tired struggler along the dusty highways of this life had been cheered by her gentle counsels, and urged to struggle forth again "faint, yet pursuing."

The Pride of the Family.

Such being her mode of life, it was with mixed feelings that Ethel Chalmers heard one day of the intended return of her only brother, with his wife and seven children from Australia, followed as it was by the news that he had landed in England, and had taken a small house on the outskirts of Bedford. Her brother and she had been great "chums" in the days when as boy and girl they roamed the meadows together, hunting for field-mice, or personating the Swiss Family Robinson in their various adventures on the desert island. But those days were now shaded in the kindly mists of the past; her brother who had left her as a boy of eighteen re-appeared as an unsuccessful man of forty, while his wife and children were altogether unknown quantities to her. No wonder then that Aunt Ethel's heart sank within her, as in due course of time came a pressing invitation to spend her Christmas at Bedford. Could she by any possibility leave the comfort and quiet of her own two rooms and place herself at the mercy of a pack of children almost fresh from the wilds of Australia? But then a rift opened in the kindly mists of the past before alluded to, and she saw her brother, not as a disappointed man of forty with an unknown wife and children, but as the fresh-faced boy she had loved and mothered long ago, and whom it had almost broken her heart to part from.

Then, again, in Aunt Ethel's ear whispered a gentle voice to which she was well accustomed to give heed, and this time what the voice said was, "It is right that you should go."

This settled the matter, so with as brave a spirit as she could pluck up Aunt Ethel bade her inward qualms be still, packed away her shyness along with her summer garments, and set forth to visit her brother's household.

Like all trials that are met bravely, this one did not turn out as formidable as she had anticipated, and Aunt Ethel soon found there was room for her even among those wild Australians. Her sister-in-law, a kind-hearted, commonplace little woman, bade her a kindly welcome, and one of the children soon set her at her ease by coming to her in distress with a torn pinafore. That was the first pinafore Aunt Ethel mended in her brother's household, but it was by no means the last. Soon she found that the added requirements of the seven children in England were all too much for her brother's wife, accustomed as she was—to use her own words—to let them run about in their former home with next to nothing upon them.

"I feel I can do so little for you, Sophy," one day said Aunt Ethel, who if the truth were told cordially disliked mending. "I have so little strength, and I don't understand much about children."

"My dear Ethel," said Sophy, solemnly, "if you would help me with the mending I would look upon you as an angel straight from heaven."

"Well," thought Aunt Ethel, "what in heaven or earth can be higher than the ministry of angels, even though it take the guise of patches and darns?" So she consented to stay until the youngest baby, the only one born on English soil, had cut his teeth.

The English baby was now a sturdy youth of two years, making a bright bit of colouring in the gloomy shrubbery, in his sky-blue frock, as his scarlet-gaitered legs kicked about vigorously amid the brown leaves, and Aunt Ethel was still at Bedford. Truth to tell, the arrival of the young gentleman with the scarlet legs did not make things any easier for his poor mother, and Aunt Ethel, having waited to welcome his entrance into this troublesome world, now waited to assist in making the world less troublesome for him, or rather, to put it plainly, in making him less troublesome to his mother.

Once, indeed, after celebrating his first birthday, when he might be fairly considered to have safely weathered the storms of babyhood, Aunt Ethel announced her intended return to her old quarters. The distress, however, of her sister-in-law was so genuine, and the outcry among the children so great, that Aunt Ethel gave way, and resolved no longer to resist the force of circumstances. She returned home indeed, but only to fetch the last remnant of her little possessions, and to give up for ever her tiny rooms. It was a strange transition from the quiet of that upstairs flat to the constant tumult of a small house, peopled by eight healthy children. Active work among poor people and books had to be laid aside, for the needle now was in constant request, and very soon Aunt Ethel began to wonder could it be really she who had darned that pile of worsted stockings or turned that pair of sheets? Indeed, wonder of wonders, Ethel Chalmers before very long found herself growing thankful for the fact that there was a sheet in want of turning! "It is such a comfort," thought she to herself, "to have a good, straight-on-end piece of work that needs neither planning nor fixing, but at which you can sit and think."

For, indeed, there was one of her old delights to which Aunt Ethel still clung, and that was writing. Sometimes she wondered how she contrived ever to think, much less to write, now; but surely the law of compensation is one of the most wondrous of the laws which govern our universe, and so it proved in this instance. For the papers that Ethel Chalmers wrote, conceived during the performance of distasteful handiwork, and written at odds and ends of time, amid the constant clatter of the vigorous young lives around her, instead of deteriorating, had a freshness and vigour about them which they lacked before.

The little Australians, taming down by degrees into ordinary English children, soon found out Aunt Ethel's secret, and there was a general family jubilation when one of her papers, which had gone forth in MS., came back in a reduced but printed form. It was a new experience to Aunt Ethel to have five or six children shouting all at once, "Oh, Aunt Ethel, make haste, make haste and come down; I'm almost sure there are proofs for you." Then, when once the proofs had gone forth on their way, there would be a constant state of expectation, and the oft-repeated wonder as to when "the editor would send a copy of the magazine."

Next in order to that important event, there would be, from time to time, a chorus of enquiries as to whether the cheque had come yet. The cheque, too, Aunt Ethel found, meant a great deal more than it had done in the old days; for these pleasant little visitors, coined as it were out of her own brain, were always regarded by Aunt Ethel, and very soon by the children too, in the light of presents to be expended as fancy should dictate.

In short, Aunt Ethel, living in the midst of what was to her naturally an uncongenial atmosphere, found her duties grow congenial by sheer force of doing them well. "The heart at leisure from itself to soothe and sympathize" brought its own blessing along with it, and Ethel Chalmers found, to her everlasting contentment, that true happiness consists, not in having the things you like to do, but in liking the things you have to do.

THE BLIND AND THOSE WHO HELP THEM.

IT is not so very long since the blind were generally considered to be practically outside of the pale of human aid; and if nothing was attempted to be done for them, it was because everyone thought nothing was possible. Then better days came on, and one invention for the betterment of the condition of the blind followed another, until it became possible not only for blind persons of ordinary intelligence to obtain an education, they were enabled on leaving school to earn their own living. This altered condition of things has partly been brought about by the solicitude which blind persons, possessing influence and means, have shown for the welfare of the poor of their own order. The energy which some of them have shown in fighting their own life's battle, and in helping others to fight theirs, has been astonishing. It is not long since we had a blind Postmaster-General, who succeeded in making the country his debtor. Then there was Elizabeth Gilbert, the blind daughter of the late Bishop of Chichester, who passed away in 1885, at the age of fifty-eight. The new and revised edition of the "Life of Miss Gilbert," by Frances Martin, which Messrs. Cassell and Co. have just issued, gives a particular account of her work for the blind. We have many interesting glimpses of life in Oxford while Dr. Gilbert was Principal of Brasenose College, and then the scene changes to Chichester. It was in the latter city, just before he left the Protestant Communion for the Apostate Church of Rome, that Archdeacon (now Cardinal) Manning one day took Miss Gilbert by the hand, remarking, "I believe you cannot find the way." The blind girl would speak of this, "I only said 'Thank you,' but I thought, 'Is it I that cannot find the way?'"

Bishop Gilbert had been school-fellow with De Quincey, and the latter, in his "Confessions of an English Opium Eater," speaks of him as "the most honourable of boys." Dr. Gilbert was happy in his home life, and was devotedly fond of his family. When, in her third year, his little daughter Bessie lost her sight through scarlet fever, it was the Doctor who nursed her, and both he and his wife were well-nigh heartbroken at the affliction which had fallen upon their child. From the first, however, they determined that the loss should not deprive Bessie of her education. She was educated with her sisters, and as far as was practicable the treatment she received was the same as that accorded to others. Bessie felt her affliction keenly, nevertheless; and in youth seems to have bemoaned the loss of pleasures which, after all, she was far better off without. Like many others, she could not realise all at once that good was being brought out of evil. In the end, however, "she never doubted that her work had been appointed for her: she never wavered in her belief that strength given by God supported her. She knew that she was the servant of God sent by Him to minister to others."

The efforts that were made by the family to discover what appliances were in use for aiding in the education of the blind, show how few they really were sixty years ago. Hence, after she had passed her twenty-first year, and having an income in her own right, Miss Gilbert thought of others, who, while afflicted like herself, had not been able to enjoy her advantages. A friend told her about the troubles of the poor in London. Then "her own sympathies naturally led her to consider the condition of the blind poor. She began to make enquiry as to their number, the places they lived in, the work they did, their homes and social condition." She also kept note-books, and visited institutions. At last, an interview which Miss Gilbert had with one Hanks Levy, in 1853, led to an industrial movement on behalf of the blind, which has ever since gone on extending. Levy had been attending the school at Avenue Road, St. John's Wood, but had really educated himself. Having thus far helped himself, he proved to be "a man of eager intelligence and generous heart. He earnestly desired the amelioration of the condition of the blind. Their disabilities had pressed upon him from his youth upwards."

In this blind enthusiast Miss Gilbert found the kind of agent she needed in order to start a scheme which was in her mind. On his part, Levy found in the Bishop's daughter just such a leader as he could follow; for, being afflicted like himself, she naturally commanded more respect than "the sighted" people, who were then too often regarded as persecutors. The man could give information, and he could gather more. "For some months," at Miss Gilbert's request, we are told, "Levy went into the streets and accosted every blind beggar whom he met, asking him or her to tell the story of their life to a blind man. 'Which would you rather do, work or beg?' he would ask when the speaker had finished. And in almost every case the answer was 'Work.' 'Why, I'd rather work, but how can I get work? Or, if I get it, how can I do it? And where can I sell it if I work at home without orders?'"

The information thus obtained was turned to good account. The blind wanted work; but they also wanted teaching how to work, no less than a certain market for their manufactures when produced. "Bessie's scheme," as it was called in the Bishop's family, proposed to supply their wants, and all the household of the Chichester Episcopal Palace, from Dr. Gilbert downwards, encouraged the blind girl to proceed with her philanthropic enterprise. At first seven blind men were supplied with working material at their own homes, the head-quarters, of which Levy was manager, being a cellar in Holborn, rented at eighteenpence a week. In his embossed writing, Levy sent weekly accounts to Chichester of receipts and expenditure; and the year 1854 showed a loss of over £130. The Holborn cellar was given up for a small house in Cromer Street, Brunswick Square. In the summer Miss Gilbert accompanied the family on a Scottish tour, and went over the School for the Blind at Edinburgh, where some new ideas were picked up; "but she saw more clearly than ever that her scheme was a new departure, and returned with confidence in her own power, and that of her blind workman to carry it forward."

The work still extended, a house and shop in Euston Road were taken; and before very long the private enterprise became a society managed by a committee, the Queen sending one of the first donations of £50, while the Bishop gave an annual subscription of £5. The Society was called "The Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind."

After three years from the start this Institution was well established, and appeared to be growing in favour with the public, the late Bishop of London being President, and Canon Dale, of St. Paul's, Vice-president. Miss Gilbert gave the whole of her time to the enterprise, and no small part of her private income, taking great care to master accounts and all matters of detail. There were develop-

W. Hanks Levy.

ments of the work, however, which are now acknowledged to have been "of doubtful utility." Thus, schools for the blind were set up, pupils and guides being paid for attending. The drawback to this was found to be that the classes were made a means of livelihood by unscrupulous persons who attended the round of the schools for the sake of the payments.

The work grew, and in proportion, as people saw its value, funds were received for the extension of the various departments. In large sums as well as small, money was forthcoming, one donor of £500 being an old lady, who called on Miss Gilbert and left ten bank notes of £50 each without disclosing her name, and without giving any clue which might lead to her identity. About the same time another £500 was given to the work by a lady. The Institution needed customers quite as much as donations, however, and circulars were issued asking householders to purchase the goods. Well-known clergymen signed these appeals, while the Bishop of London and Mr. Gladstone, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, advocated the claims of the cause. The work and the trade extended until, in 1866, the receipts were between seven and eight thousand pounds. "Bessie's scheme" as the family still called it, had developed into a great philanthropic association, and the method began to be copied in America.

The work which Miss Gilbert was enabled to accomplish was that of an invalid. For the last fifteen years of her life she was more or less of a sufferer, and during several years was unable even to leave her room. In 1874, her faithful manager, Hanks Levy, died, and difficulties increased; but the public interest had been aroused, and the foundation of an institution had been laid which would continue to be far-reaching in its influence after the founder's death. A special bequest of £10,000 stimulated new enterprise; and the premises in Oxford Street were given up for a larger house in Berners Street. In time this has become too straitened. Hence, "A site has been obtained in Tottenham Court Road, at the corner of Tavistock Street. A large shop and numerous excellent work-rooms have been erected. Blind men and women, working at many trades, will, with the public support they can justly claim, and are sure to receive, earn wages that will make them independent and self-supporting. So shall Miss Gilbert's lifelong work on their behalf be justified and rewarded."

It would sometimes seem as though certain afflicted persons understood the art of making life a success better than many who have health and all their faculties unimpaired. It is a rare privilege, granted only to few, to be permitted to found a beneficent work which shall continue to bless the needy through successive generations; but this was accomplished by the blind woman who sacrificed ease, time and money to help those who were afflicted like herself, but who needed a helping hand to raise them from their misery.

G. H. P.

LOTUS LILIES.

THE lotus lily is spoken of as "the peerless flower of Farther India."

It is a kind of water lily, and is considered a wonderful flower by the people of the countries in which it is found. The Egyptians once considered it sacred to their gods, and in India the Hindoo gods are often represented as seated upon the expanded flower. In China and Japan it is closely connected with Buddha, and has a large place in the worship of that god. In China the lotus lily symbolises womanly beauty, the small feet of women being called *kin leen*, or golden lilies.

The petals of the lotus lily are rose-pink, growing brighter and redder toward the tips. Opening the rosy lips, the golden heart of the flower is disclosed, surrounded by a silky fringe of stamens of the same bright hue, edged with pure white pollen. The leaves of the plant are dark green, almost round, and lie or float upon the bosom of the lake. The stems are like long green serpents, rearing their spiral forms from the black ooze beneath the water, and holding aloft their banners of green and blossoms of beauty and fragrance.

But notwithstanding the fact that the plant is held sacred, many of the Chinese cultivate it for sale. The fragrant blossoms reach a diameter of ten inches, and find ready purchasers. The seeds are used as an article of food; sometimes eaten raw, sometimes ground and made into cakes. The fleshy stems are used as a vegetable, while the fibres of the leaf stalks serve for lampwicks.

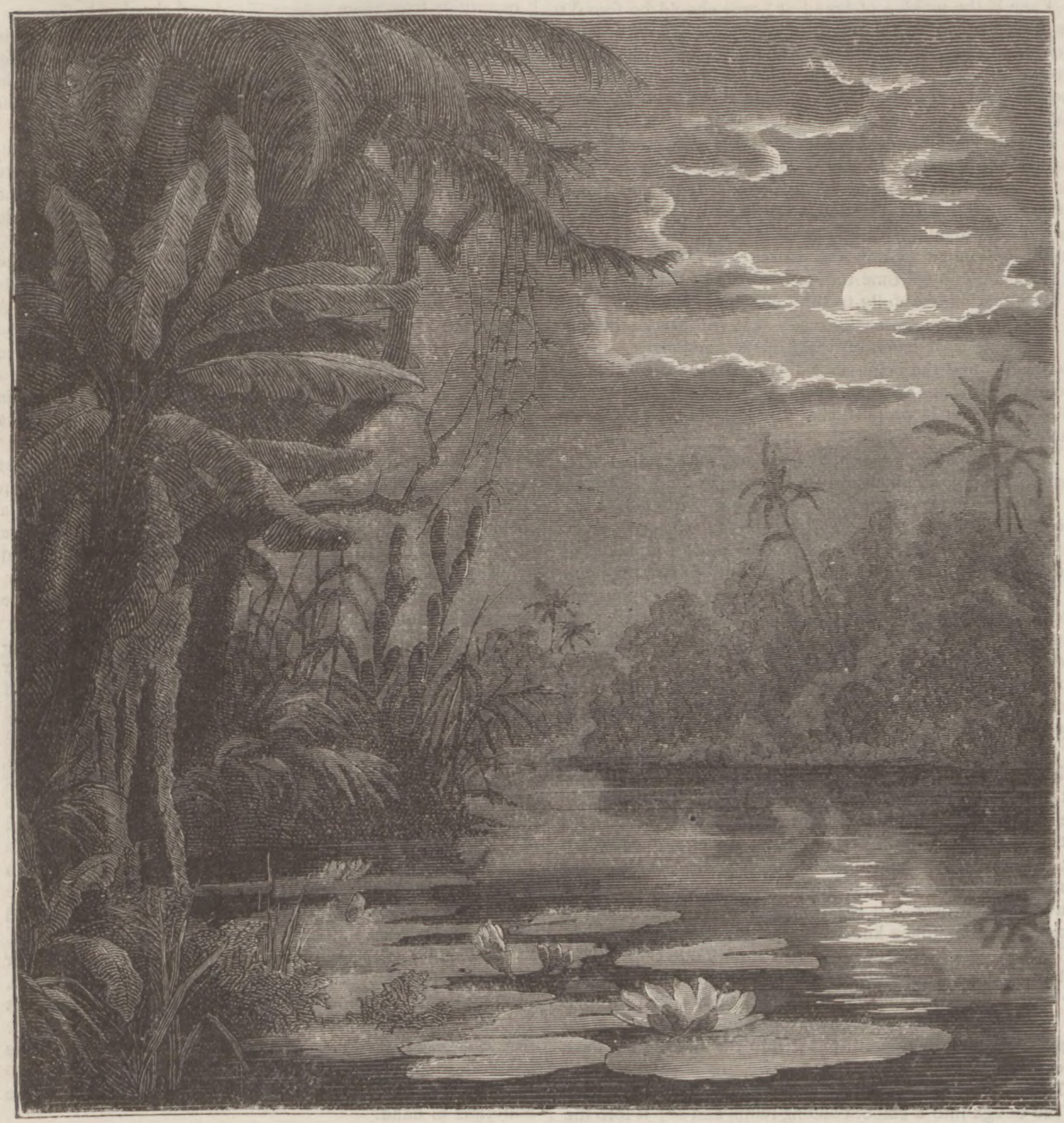
The ancient Egyptians used to inclose the seeds in balls

of clay or mud, and cast them into the Nile, and in due season the plant appeared, followed by buds, flowers, and seeds.

In Siam the lotus lilies grow in great profusion, and one may sail for miles along the rivers through flooded fields covered with the lotus blossoms, which the natives are gathering for market.

Then there are the royal lotus gardens of Bangkok. These are several miles from the king's palace. There is a carriage road leading out from the city, and these gardens are a famous place for picnics. At the grand funeral ceremonies of the Queen of Siam, one of the companies which walked in the procession carried tridents, the triple tips of which were each crowned with the white lotus. Every year thousands of real and artificial lilies are floated on the rivers and sea as offerings to the water spirits. They are launched at night, with little wax tapers burning, and are loaded with offerings to the gods.

Many beautiful fancies cluster about the lotus, and many songs have been written, which you may appreciate the more, if you happen to come across them, for knowing something about the beautiful fragrant flower "trembling on the crystal tide."



Lotus Lilies.

THRIFTY COOKERY.

BY GINA JONES.

Bread and Cakes.

BREAD is not often made at home nowadays. In some respects this is a pity. It is true that bakers' bread is even in quality and generally good of its kind, and that the trouble of making and baking even a small quantity of bread at home is considerable. But on the other hand, home-made bread costs less and gives more nourishment in proportion to the outlay, and is, therefore, altogether the most economical.

Even if the making of bread at home should be found to be inconvenient, as a rule it is very advisable for young women and girls to learn how to make it, for, with the extensive schemes of emigration which are being carried on, they might easily find themselves in a position in which the art of making good bread would be invaluable to them.

A home-made loaf is almost invariably heavier and closer than a loaf from the bakers. This is partly because it is made altogether of flour. The bakers frequently put in potatoes, boiled and mashed, to produce a good colour in their white bread. But this heaviness also arises from unskilful handling; and another cause of it is that the bread is not given enough time to rise before it is baked.

By attending carefully to the following rules a small loaf of good bread can be easily made. It will not be difficult to make a larger batch of dough if the smaller quantity is successful, and the beginner will soon find that as she improves in her handling of the dough she will be able to do with less yeast in proportion to the flour in making larger quantities.

Take a pound of household flour and put it into a large basin with a good pinch of salt, then take half an ounce of German yeast and put it into a cup with half a teaspoonful of sugar; work these together till the yeast gets quite soft and liquid. Add to it half a pint of tepid water and mix it up; the water must be just lukewarm, not hot, or it will prevent the yeast from working. Then pour this into the middle of the flour, and mix down a little of the flour into it. Cover the basin with a cloth and stand it in a warm place to rise for half an hour or more. When the top of the water is covered with bubbles take up the basin and work in all the flour, using a little more tepid water if needed. After this cover it over and set it to rise again for two or three hours. Do not let the basin get too hot. It is impossible to hurry the rising of the bread; letting it get too hot only spoils it, as it stops the yeast working. In the meantime get up a good fire, as the bread requires a hot oven. When the bread has risen the second time turn out the dough on a board and knead it well. Try to work it so that you fold up some air in the dough each time that you double it over. It is not enough merely to thump it about, this sometimes knocks the air out of it.

To make it up into a cottage-loaf cut off one-third, make up both pieces into smooth balls, put the smaller on the top of the larger, flour two fingers, and press them down through the top piece almost to the board. Lay the loaf on a tin slightly greased or floured, put it into the oven, and bake it for one hour.

To make a tin-loaf of it grease a small bread-tin, make up the dough into a smooth oblong lump, and slip it into the tin. Take a fork and prick it half-a dozen times down to the tin through the dough. Remember that a tin-loaf must be set to rise a third time in the tin; this will take about twenty minutes. It should then be baked, and will take the same time as the cottage-loaf. If there is any doubt about its being quite baked enough when you take it out, turn it out of the tin and put it back into the oven on its side to finish cooking.

The German yeast mentioned in this recipe is that which is now most generally used. It can be obtained in small quantities from most bakers if ordered the day before.

Cake making is not so troublesome as bread making in some ways, for cakes are not generally made with yeast, and therefore they are not set to rise. Looking back at the directions for making bread, it will be seen that the rising takes the greater part of the time required.

Even a beginner ought to be able to make a moderate-sized cake in an hour, and allowing it another hour to bake, that gives two hours altogether. Of course, anyone who has a knowledge of the methods employed could do it more quickly.

The first thing to see about is the oven. Unless the oven is suitable it would be a mere waste of good materials to start working. A *very hot* oven is not required. A moderate heat, well kept up, but never allowed to get too fierce, is the best for all cakes. As a general rule the fire should be well up to the top bar in either an open or a close range. If the latter is used, the damper, which is just over the oven, should be drawn out and the others closed.

The next thing to see after is the cake tin. This must be well greased, and it saves a great deal of trouble in turning out the cake if the bottom of the tin is lined with a piece of greased paper. This may be cut by placing the tin on the paper, and then running the knife or the point of the scissors round it, so as to make a mark on the paper, and afterwards cutting it out. The paper should then be greased and laid in the bottom of the tin.

To make an ordinary good raisin cake the following ingredients should be taken:—One pound of flour, four ounces of butter or fat, half-a pound of raisins, quarter of a pound of sugar, one teaspoonful of baking powder, one egg, and half a pint of milk. Put the flour into a basin and rub up the fat into it, then add the sugar (castor sugar is the best, but moist sugar will do) and the baking powder. Stone the raisins and put them in. After this all the dry ingredients will be in the basin, and they should be well mixed before adding the egg and milk. Break the egg into a small basin, and beat it well with a fork. Then add the milk, and mix altogether, but do not stir it more than is necessary to mix it. Turn it all into the papered tin and put it on the hottest shelf of the oven at once. If it begins to scorch on the top put it on a cooler shelf. This cake will take an hour and a half to bake. Feel the top of it to see if it is done. If it is not cooked it will feel soft and yielding, if it feels quite firm the cake is done. If the method of making this cake is thoroughly understood it will be quite easy to alter the recipe so as to form a variety according to the materials in hand.

The ingredients which should *not* be interfered with are

these four, namely, the flour, the fat, the baking powder, and the milk.

Supposing that a more economical cake were wanted, the following ingredients would do :—One pound of flour, four ounces of fat or dripping, four ounces of currants, four ounces of sugar, one teaspoonful of baking powder, one egg and half a pint of milk; or, if seed cake were required, all that would be necessary would be to leave out the currants, and put in two teaspoonfuls of caraway seeds instead. The egg may be omitted if another teaspoonful of baking powder be put in, but the extra amount of baking powder does not replace the nourishment given by the egg, it only prevents the cake from being heavy.

It is very often better to make a batch of little cakes instead of one large one, they take much less time to bake, and are more convenient. Any of the recipes given would do to make rock cakes, but much less milk must be used. It is impossible to tell exactly how much to take, the best way is to get the dry ingredients together, and then stir in enough milk to make a very stiff mixture. Then grease a baking tin, and lay some of it on the tin in small rough heaps, and bake them for about fifteen or twenty minutes.

If the whole quantity given in these recipes is made into rock cakes, it will be more than can usually be baked at once. In that case the second baking should be ready to go into the oven as the first comes out.

Carefully made and nicely baked, these plain cakes form a most satisfactory addition to ordinary fare; but a lighter, prettier kind of cake is often sought after. These require a totally different method of mixing. For a light sandwich cake no butter or fat need be used, except to grease the tin with. It is better to have quite flat tins, with a slight edge, to bake these in. There is nothing so nice for them as a proper baking sheet, but as these cost from two-and-sixpence to three shillings, the cake is often baked in a common Yorkshire pudding tin, which answers the purpose fairly well. The tin must be greased and papered before the cake is put in it.

The following ingredients will be wanted :—Two eggs, half a teaspoonful of baking powder, and two tablespoonfuls of milk, the weight of the eggs in castor sugar, and also the weight of the eggs in flour, but the flour must be kept separate from the sugar.

Put the sugar into a basin and break the eggs into it. Stir this with a wooden spoon, or whisk it with an egg-whisk till it becomes very thick and creamy—it will take about twenty minutes—then mix the baking powder with the flour and sprinkle them in, stirring the flour in very lightly. Add the milk at the same time, and as soon as it is all mixed up turn it out at once into the greased tin and spread it out with a knife, put it into the oven, and bake it as quickly as possible. Sprinkle some castor sugar over a piece of paper laid on the table. When the cake is done turn the tin upside-down on the paper which is on the table. Lift up the tin and take the paper (which was greased and laid in the tin) off the cake. Then cut the cake straight in two, spread some jam on one half, and double the other half over it, press it down very lightly and cut it into fingers. Sprinkle a little more castor sugar over them after they are laid on the plate. It is always better to put these cakes, and the others also, on a sieve, or otherwise arrange them so that the air gets underneath them, until they are cold. After that they can be laid flat on a plate or dish.

THE THINGS IN THE BOTTOM DRAWER.

THERE are dolls and tops and pieces of string,
There are shoes which no little feet wear,
There are bits of ribbon and broken rings,
And tresses of golden hair;
There are little dresses folded away,
Out of the light of the summer day.

There are dainty jackets that never are worn,
There are toys and models of ships,
There are books and pictures all faded and torn,
And marked by the finger tips
Of dimpled hands that have fallen to dust—
Yet I strive and know that the Lord is just.

But a feeling of bitterness fills my soul
Sometimes, when I try to pray—
That the reaper hath spared so many flowers,
And taken mine all away.

And I almost ask if the Lord can know
That a mother's heart can love them so.

Then I think of the many weary ones
Who are waiting and watching to-night
For the slow return of faltering feet
That have strayed from the paths of right;
Who have darkened their lives by shame and sin,
Whom the snares of the tempter have gathered in.

They wander afar in distant climes,
They perish by field and flood;
Their hands are black with the direst crimes
That kindle the wrath of God.
Yet a mother's song hath soothed them to rest,
She hath lulled them to slumber upon her breast.

And then I think of my children three,
My babes that never grow old,
And know they are waiting and watching for me
In the city with streets of gold,
Safe, safe from the cares of the weary years,
From sorrow and sin and war.
And I thank my God with falling tears,
For the things in the bottom drawer.

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

In our two preceding numbers we have had something to say about ladies' dresses and mantles. This month we shall turn our attention more especially to the younger members of the family.

Fig. 8.

Plain and fancy woollen materials are very much used for making children's dresses, sometimes in combination with silk or velvet. Two remnants can sometimes be met with, which will serve to make a dress of this kind. We give an illustration of such an one (Fig. 8); but the design could be carried out in a variety of ways according to taste. The pattern is suitable for a girl from six to eight years of age, and will take about one and three-quarter yards of velveteen and two and a-half yards of double width woollen stuff. The model was made in myrtle green velvet, while the stuff is of the same colour, but a shade lighter, and both body and skirt are ornamented with coral stitching in yellow silk. In making this dress it will be best to have a fitting body lining with a deep yoke and collar of velvet. Over this will come the corselet body, made of stuff which is cut full, like a sailor blouse, and has a run for elastic at the bottom edge. It fastens under the left arm, and buttons on both shoulders. The lining of the velvet sleeve is gathered together with the stuff, and set on to the cuff and into the fitting lining. The skirt, which is about two yards wide and half a yard long, is lined throughout, and has a band of scolloped velvet at the bottom.

Fig. 9.

Long cloaks are very much worn by children this season, and their jackets either reach to the bottom of the dress or are three-quarter length, some of them being finished with a cape and hood.

Large hats are the order of the day for children. Some of these have conical crowns, and are simply trimmed with a box pleating of satin ribbon, into which a few quill feathers are introduced. Loops and ends finish the back of the hat.

The Dutch bonnet, which has been such a comfort to the little ones during the cold weather, is still worn, and is very becoming and easily made.

Fig. 9 shows a lady's apron made in plaid zephyr. Most of our readers will have noticed that large aprons, both for morning and afternoon wear, have taken the place of the very small ones, which were more ornament than protection. The apron shown in our illustration has a plain skirt about a yard long, and is sloped out at the waist and set into a band, while the bib is simply a piece of material measuring nine inches by twelve. Fig. 10 is an afternoon apron, and has a plain skirt similar to Fig. 9, but is finished with a Swiss belt ornamented with a cord and small pompon in front.

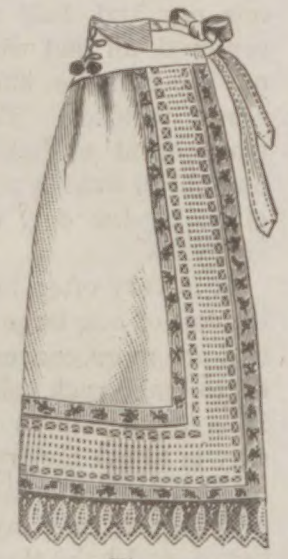


Fig. 10.

Fig. 11 shows little boy's blouse pinafore, which can be worn over a knickerbocker suit. It is cut in one piece if the material used is wide enough, and the sleeve is formed by the addition of a small gusset, and closes with buttons on the shoulder. Brown holland or drill will be suitable for this pattern. Coral stitching in red or blue ingrain cotton is the only trimming used.

Fig. 12. Here we show a pattern suitable for a child's outdoor dress. It is made on a lined fitting yoke, and trimmed with embroidery and fancy braid. The full sleeve is finished with a cuff of embroidery, while the waist is drawn in with a band of the material tied in bows and ends at the back. The pattern is suitable for a child from one to two years of age. White beigè or cashmere can be used, a strip of which may be buttonholed with white silk, and used to trim the neck and sleeves; if embroidery is bought, one and a-quarter yards will be required.

Fig. 11.

Fig. 12.

A few tucks above the wide hem at the bottom of the skirt will be an advantage, as they can be let down in case of shrinking. Two yards of double-width material will be required.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Fig. 8, 6½d.; Figs. 9, 10, 11, and 12, 4½d. each. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, E.C.